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Dr. MEGGOTT's
SERMON
Before the
QUEEN,

AT
WHITE-HALL,

March 11th. 1691.



A
SERMON
Preached before the
QUEEN,
AT
WHITE-HALL.
MARCH 11th 169¹/₂.

By R. Meggott, D. D. Dean of *Winchester*,
And Chaplain to Their Majesties.

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L O N D O N:

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St. Matth. III. viii.

*Bring forth therefore fruits meet for
Repentance.*

WHEN *one Preacher of Repen-*
tance could work so far upon
Jews, that there went out to
him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region
round about Jordan, and were baptized of him,
confessing their sins, as we read Ver. 5th. and
6th. of this Chapter ; I am not willing to
suppose that so many as from time to time
have come to you upon the same Errand should
have prevailed nothing. God forbid that so
many earnest Exhortations should have been
in vain to you ! God forbid that any here
should have so much to answer for ! By your
presence in this place, it is meet for me to think
this of you all, That at least you do not come
short.

short of these : My Design is to inform you that these came short of their Duty, and that every sinner who would make his Peace with God must exceed them.

As there is *Science falsely so called*, so there is *Repentance* too ; and it is not to be doubted but that more perish by *Repenting amiss*, than do by not *Repenting at all*. Few so feared, but after one sort or another do something that they call so ; and yet tho' the number of such *Penitents* be as the sand upon the Sea-shore, but a remnant of them shall be saved : no more, than those of them who to their *Repentance* add *Amendment*.

If any thing less would have served, these spoken to in the Text would not have been found fault with. They had the looks of *Penitents*, they spake the *Language* of *Penitents*, they wore the *Garments* of *Penitents*, they used the *Diet* of *Penitents* : But when there was nothing more, all this commended them not to God, but is censured by the Baptist as the Ceremonious *Sacrifice of Fools*, as the Vain-glorious neglect of the *Body* ; and they warned, as they would fly from the wrath to come, not to abuse themselves with such deceitful Fancies ; given to understand that *Repentance* strictly

strictly taken, if it be *true*, hath no *promise* but as it is *productive* of a *change* of *Life*. And upon that account, with a *Conscientious plainness*, *vehemence*, and *sharpness* he here presseth them, That they would *bring forth fruits meet for Repentance*.

That the reason of this Exhortation may appear the clearer, I would desire your Attention to the opening these three things:

First, That a *bare Repentance* without *Fruits* I. is not all that is required of us in order to our Pardon.

2dly, That we may bring forth several *fruits* II. of *Repentance*, and yet not those that are meet neither.

3dly, That as we would have our Repen- III. tance accepted, we must not content our selves with any *fruits*, but such as properly manifest the Sincerity and Ingenuity of it.

The first of these Particulars I would speak I. to, is, That a *bare Repentance* without *fruits* is not all that is required of us in order to our Pardon. So the *Baptist* plainly implieth here. But is this like a *fore-runner* of *Christ*? This seemeth not so much to *prepare*, as *contradict*

tradict the way of the Lord. His Command is, that *Repentance and Remission of sins* should be preached in his Name. And is not this to put asunder that which he hath joyned together? Seemingly it doth so.

But if we consider the *different acceptations* of this word in Scripture, we shall find no cause to be offended. One doth not *destroy*, what the other *buildeth*; they both mean the same thing.

For the most part *Repentance* is used in so comprehensive a sense, as to note both the *Tree* and the *Fruit* too. Accordingly St. Paul, when he summeth up the *whole Duty* of a Christian, reduceth it to these two Heads, *Acts 20. 21.* *Repentance toward God, and Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.* Where *Faith* being only a *believing the Articles* of our Religion, *Repentance* must include in it all the rest, our *conformity to all its Precepts*. And if we will understand it thus, too much cannot be said of it. So, it is the *Evangelical City of Refuge*, the *undoubted Heir of the Promise*.

But if we take *Repentance* for no more, than sometimes is meant by it, for that particular *Grace singly*, so it is no otherwise the
Con-

Condition of the New Covenant than a hopeful Spring is Harvest.

To Cure those dangerous Conceits of this kind, that are so rife, and have been imbibed so deep, we will take a view of the several parts of which Repentance doth consist, and shew you that there is not any of them but what may be in them that perish.

Repentance being such an inward sense of our sins, as bringeth us to an acknowledgment of them, with grief for what is past, and purpose to reform for the future, hath but these four things in it.

*Conviction,
Confession,
Humiliation, and
Good Resolutions.*

Now there are not any of these but what have been in the Children of Perdition.

First, As to *Conviction*: Tho' a sort of Men have thought fit to set it out under the affected Title of the *Pangs of the New Birth*; and taught their followers to date their *Conversion* from the terrors of it: when it is only

ly an apprehension of our Guilt and Danger, it cannot in it self be any *Virtue* at all, being but that we are meerly *passive* in. They who use studied Arts to elude it, can no more prevent it, than they can the *Cholick* in their *Bowels*, or the *Lightning* flashing in their faces. When St. Paul reasoned of Righteousness, and Temperance, and Judgment to come, *Felix* could not help trembling; nor the *Pharisees* when the case was put home to them, being convicted of their own Consciences. So that this may be, and we no more in a state of Grace than either of these were.

Acts 24.

25.

John 8.9.

2. The next part of it is *Confession*, the humble acknowledgment of our sins unto God. This is a piece of *Ingenuity* that we are much encouraged to. He looketh upon men (saith Job 37.27. *Elihu*) and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which is right, and it profited me not; he will deliver his soul from going into the pit. Only acknowledge thine iniquity that thou hast transgressed against the Lord (saith God in *Jeremy*) and I will not cause mine anger to rest upon thee. If we confess our sins (saith St. *John*) he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, &c. But can any imagine

Job 37.27.

Jer. 3.13.

1 John 9.

imagine that it is a *bare Confession* that all these Promises belong to? No, by a Figure familiar to the Holy, as well as other Writings, it is only a *part put for the whole*, when such glorious things are spoken of it. The Event sheweth there is more than so expected from the Sinner. If Confession alone had been enough, Saul would have fared as well as David, his Confession was altogether as ample. When Nathan reproved David, his Answer was, *I have sinned against the Lord*, 2 Sam. 12. 13. When Samuel reproved Saul, he said as much. Saul said unto Samuel, *I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord*, 1 Sam. 15. 24. And yet tho' David's sin was done away, Saul (you know) was rejected. So little is this part also of Repentance to be relied on.

The Third is *Humiliation* under, and *Sorrow* for the sins we have committed. This is a thing People have such Opinion of as generally to fancy Repentance to be nothing else; so that if they find but something of this in themselves, they conclude they are safe, and all is well with them. But this is much to over-reckon also; 2 Cor. 7. 10. the

Apostle informeth us, that godly sorrow worketh repentance unto life, &c. It is a good beginning, and well managed may bring us to repentance unto life, but it self is not to be accounted so. If it were, then *Ahab* repented unto life, for he humbled himself, and put on sackcloth. If it were, the Hypocrites complained of in *Isaiah*, repented unto life, for they afflicted their souls, and spread ashes under them. If it were, *Judas* himself repented unto life, for he was so overwhelmed with sorrow for what he had done, that he burst asunder in the midst. So ineffectual may this part of Repentance be also, sorrow for our sins.

1 Kings 21
29.

Isai. 58. 5.

Acts 1. 18.

4.

The last is Resolution of Amendment. This looketh best of any, and if Men could be sure they should keep them, when they make them, they might have grounds to hope, that he who calleth the things that are not, as if they were, would graciously accept them. But (alas!) what are most Mens Resolutions of this kind? like the hasty Blossoms produced by some unexpected warmth of Weather, they adorn the Tree with their inviting Colours, and are promising to the Eye, but

but not one in a hundred of them cometh to good, but drop to the ground before they knit, and frustrate Expectation. Such are most of our Resolutions, but casual Embryo's of incomplete velleities, that frequently before they are any thing more, miscarry and prove Abortive; dye before they could well be said to live. Experience sadly convinceth us we can no more depend on them than on the *Morning-Cloud* for *Rain*.

It is a mistake that *μετάνοια*, which signifieth a change of Mind, doth always import a Saving Repentance: The word is used by the Septuagint, *Prov.* 14. 15. in the same sense with *μεταμέλεια*, which is allowed to note but the fruitless one of *Reprobates*. There may be, too often is, a present *Change of Mind* that *proveth no better*; and therefore the Holy Ghost joyneth other words with it, to explain and adjust it. So *St. Peter*, *Acts* 3. 19. *Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.* And *St. Paul*, *Acts* 26. 20. *Repent and turn unto God*, to shew that it is not enough to have *better Resolutions*, unless as God giveth space and Opportunity we put them into *Practice*.

This

This is sufficient to be spoken to the first Proposition, That bare *Repentance* without *Fruits* is not all that is required of us in order to our *Pardon*. I proceed to the

- II. Second, That we may bring forth several *Fruits* of *Repentance*, and yet not those that are meet neither. That was the case of these here spoken to in the Text, the *Pharisees* and *Sadducees*.

The latter of these the *Sadducees*; tho' they denyed that great *Article of Faith*, and motive to *Repentance*, the *Immortality of the Soul*, and consequently its *Rewards* or *Punishments* in another Life; yet they were not direct *Atheists*, but had some belief and fear of God with them notwithstanding. They received the *Law of Moses*, and were so persuaded of the certainty of the *Temporal Blessings and Curses* written in it, as made them regular *Observers* of the letter of it. Some of the High Priests themselves, *Hircanus*, *Aristobulus*, *Alexander*, &c. were of this Sect; and many of them are said, ver. 7. to be so wrought on by the *Preaching of John*, as to come to his *Baptism*, confessing their sins.

The other, the *Pharisees*, St. Paul, who understood them well (having himself been one of them) *Acts* 26. 5. calleth the *straiteſt Sect of our Religion*. They were more *pre- ciſe* than any of the reſt. *Joſephus* ſaith they did nearly reſemble the *Stoicks* among the *Greeks*, who had the higheſt Eſteem of any of their Philoſophers, for the Severity of their way of Living. The Common People had ſuch an Opinion of their Sanctity, that it was *Proverbially* ſaid among them, That if but two Men in the World went to Heaven, one of them muſt be a *Phariſee*.

And yet for all this, though *others thought* them ſo very *Righteous*, though they *trufte*d in *themſelves* that they were *righteous*, they are here called a *Generation of Vipers*. That which was ſo highly eſteemed with men, was but an *abomination* in the ſight of God; and if we conſider it, we ſhall find Reason for it.

I will not inſiſt upon what our bleſſed Lord ſo oft ubraideth them with, the *vile* and *ſelfiſh*, the *pau*ltry and *hypocritical ends* they had in all their *Religious Performances*; namely, to make themſelves *Popular*, and ſerve their *Secular Interests*; tho' this alone muſt render the *beſt* things we can do *odious* and *loathſome* to him
who

who seeth not as man seeth, but requireth truth in the inward parts : Yet because it is not so much their aims and intentions in doing them, as the things themselves which they did, that seem here reflected on, I shall confine my Discourse to them, and mark out two considerable defects in them.

First, Tho' they brought forth some Fruits, they were but some, not all that were required of them.

Secondly, Tho' they brought forth some Fruits, they were but coarse and mean, such as were of least value.

First, Tho' they brought forth some Fruits, they were but some, not all that were required of them. One part of their Duty was taken, and another left ; one regarded, and another rejected, according as it was in vogue, or suited with their inclinations. Instead of an universal, they yielded unto God a partial Obedience ; flattering themselves that their extraordinary niceness about some particular Precepts, should excuse their neglect, and make amends for their violation of others. They presumed that their Devotion should commute for their Injustice, and

and that because they were *temperate in eating and drinking*, they should not be condemned for being *covetous or malicious*. Being truly *zealous against Idolatry*, they were not concerned for their *Lying, Pride, or Envy*; and as long as they kept themselves free from *gross carnal sins*, there was no convincing them but that they were *the Children of God*, though they abounded in all sorts of *Spiritual*.

But if ye offer the *lame for Sacrifice*, is it not evil? St. James informeth us, Chap. 2. 10. who-soever shall keep the whole Law (*besides*) and yet offend in one point, that is, *wilfully and habitually*, (let the Instance be what it will) he is guilty of all: It is not upon God's account; but his own, from Conscience towards him, but respect to himself, that such a one sticketh at the rest of them. It must be granted, we cannot, when we have done our utmost, *actually* keep all, but if we do not our sincere endeavour *conscientiously* to keep all, we are but *counterfeit and pretended Penitents*. That is one fault in the *Fruits* which these brought forth; tho' they brought forth *some*, they were but *some*, not all that were required of them.

2. The other is, That though they brought forth *some Fruits*, they were but *coarse and*

mean ones, such as were of least value. All the Commandments of God are equal in respect of their Authority, but they are not so, in respect of their Nature: So, some are of far more importance than others; and their usual manner was to rest in the performance of those that were least material. Thus our Saviour describeth them to themselves, Matth. 23. Ye pay tythe of mint, and annice, and cummin, but omit the weightier matters of the Law, mercy, and judgment, and faith.

They did not *distinguish* as they ought, between *Natural Duties*, and such as are only *Relative*; between the *Essential* parts of Religion, and such as are but *Instrumental*; between the *power of Godliness*, and the empty *form* of it. Accordingly, they were *punctual* in *fasting twice in the week*, and used their *Bodies* hardly, but minded not so much the *mortifying* their *inordinate Affections*, which were the *Springs* of all their *outward actions*. They daily read some *portion of the Law*, and got great part of it *without book*, but they did not make *Conscience of keeping the Commandments of it*, but made them void by their *own Traditions*.

They

They were strict Observers of the Sabbath-day, so as to do no manner of work on it ; but their Tongues did not rest from slandering their Neighbours on it, nor their Thoughts from laying Snares for them.

I would not be understood as if *these* things were despicable in themselves, they minister to Piety, and ought to be encouraged, but only when the *other* are left undone (to let you know) then they are no where more to be prized, than they were *here*. The most specious of them all are but so many empty Shells without their Kernels ; like that Offering (mentioned by Pausanias) to Ceres Phrygaliensis, not the Honey of their Bees, but only the Wax, the dry and tasteless part of their Labours. They are all consistent with a Carnal Mind and reigning Sins, with a hard heart and a wicked life ; the unjust and the filthy, the sensual and the uncharitable may abound in them, and yet be unjust and filthy, sensual and uncharitable still. They who would approve themselves Penitents indeed, must bring forth Fruits of a more substantial excellent kind. *These were not*, but they must bring forth fruits that are meet for Repentance. And this is

The last Proposition I have to speak to ; Prop. 3.

That if we would have our *Repentance* accepted with God, we must not content our selves with any *Fruits*, but such as properly *manifest* the *Reality* and *Ingenuity* of it, *Fruits* indeed *meet* for Repentance. This we cannot but grant in the *general*; but least any of us should *flatter* our selves in the *case*, as these *conceited* ones here did, and think those *so* that are *not*, besides what may be gathered from that which hath been already spoken, it will be convenient for the clearer explication of the *Phrase* to acquaint you, that there is a two-fold *meetness* we are to have regard to in the *Fruits of our Repentance*.

- I. First, That they be *meet* with respect to our selves.
 - II. Secondly, That they be *meet* with respect to others.
1. They must be *meet* with respect to our selves, and that two ways: *meet* with respect to our lives *past*, and *meet* also with respect to our lives for the *future*.
 1. The *Fruits of our Repentance* should be *meet* with reference to our lives *past*. Our *Humiliation* bearing some *proportion* to the *sins* we

we have been guilty of. When our blessed Lord, *Luke 15. 7.* speaketh of *just* persons that *need no Repentance*, we are not to understand it absolutely but in a *qualified* sense : There are none so just but need *some* (the Righteous falleth seven times a day) but they who from their *Youth* have lived *vertuously* and *piously*, without being stained with any *foul* and *heinous* Crime, are said *comparatively* not to need *Repentance* ; that is, not *such* a one , so sharp and *signal*, so deep and *grievous*, as they who have been *extravagant* and *scandalous* sinners are obliged to ; but where *Transgression* hath *exceeded*, there it is *meet* that the *Repentance* should exceed also.

If it be *true*, it is not to be imagined how it can be otherwise. You may as well suppose a Man to be no more concerned for a dangerous Wound with a Sword, than for a slight Scratch with a Pin, as that a true *Penitent* should be no more disturbed for *crying* and *presumptuous* sins, than for sins of meer *surprize* and ordinary *frailties*. It is observable that when *David* had fallen into the *great transgression*, though a *Prophet* from God had expressly told him, that *his sin was done away* ; yet for all that, he roared for the *very disquietness* of his heart,

heart, and his bones were consumed within him; he mourned all the day long like a dove, and watered his Couch with his tears; he chastened himself with fasting, and eat ashes like bread. And if he did this who was sure of his Pardon, what shall we think of them who have sinned as heinously, and yet do little or nothing in this kind, tho' they are not sure? It is true, Penitential Sorrow is not seated in the *Affections* directly, but in the *Understanding*; and is rather *Hatred* than *Grief*. So that if *this* appears in the *rational Appetite*, that we loath and abhor our evil ways, it is not absolutely necessary it should be in the *sensible*. But when in other cases *that* hath so general an influence upon *this*, it is *suspicious* that the heart is not so thoroughly affected as it ought, where it hath no discernable effects upon the *outward man*. They who are conscious to themselves of any *scarlet sins*, of any *flagrant* and *enormous vices*, ought to consider that *this* is one *meetsness* in the *Fruits* of their *Repentance*, they should judge themselves by, whether they have a *meetsness* with respect to their *lives past*.

The

The other is, That they be *meet* with 2.
 respect to our *Lives for the future*, becoming
 such as have *really repented* them of their *evil ways*. That is, there must be a *putting*
off the former Conversation, and we must be
new Creatures. The severest significations of
 trouble for our *sins past*, if we *forsake* them
 not upon it, St. Paul appositely calleth * *bo-* ^{* 1 Tim. 4.}
dily Exercise, telling us, *it profiteth little*;
 and accordingly we are to esteem of it.
 It is not that which *most vexeth* us, but that
 which *most pleaseth God*, we are chiefly to
 take care of in our *Repentance*. Now he
 looketh upon all that we do, without *a-*
mendment; all *Penances*, all *revenge upon our*
selves, but as *Self-deceit* and *Superstition*. He
 that will drink nothing but *Water* for so
 long time, because he hath been *intemperate*,
 and will make a *Beast* of himself again,
 next time he meeteth with his *Comrades*;
 he that giveth so much *Money* to a *pious* use
 as a *fine* upon himself for his *Uncleanness*,
 and turneth again to *folly* upon sight of the
strange Women; hath rather the *Ague* of *Re-*
pentance, than the *Grace*: Such a one may
 be said to have *fits* of *Repentance*, but not
 the *fruits* of it: They are firm and lasting.

To

To have these *meet*, it is not enough that there be an *utter forsaking* of the *sin*, but there ought to be likewise a careful exercise of the opposite *Grace* to it. It is not enough for the *profane* man, that he talk no more *corruptly* and *atheistically*, his communication must be *good to the use of edifying*: for the *licentious* man, that he leave off his *wildness* and *debaucheries*, he must be an example of *gravity* and *sobriety*. So St. Paul admonisheth the converted Romans, Chap. 6. 19. *As ye have yielded your Members servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now yield your Members servants to righteousness unto holiness.* That thence forward they would be as eminently *vertuous*, as before they had been *loose* and *vicious*. This is *meet* in the *fruits* of our *Repentance* as to our *selves*.

But this is not all, the *fruits* of it must be *meet* with respect to *others* also; as many as have been any ways wronged or injured by our *sins*.

Besides the dishonour done to God by them, sometimes mens *sins* are highly *prejudicial* and *mischievous* to their *Neighbours*. And where it hath been so, the *fruits* of *Repentance*

penance are not *meet*, except they extend to them too, according as they have been damaged by them, either

In their *Outward* man, or
Their *Inward*.

First, If they have been damaged by them in their *outward* man. Thus he who hath taken away the *Life* of another, in *Duel* or *heat of Blood*; must not think he *repenteth* by *lamenting* and being *sorry* for it, (tho he can make no *satisfaction* to the person himself, whom he hath thrust into the other World in so unbecoming, so dangerous a posture) it is *meet* he be sollicitous to make the *best* and *most proper* he can, to that of him which is left, his *Relatives* that survive him. He who by *defiling* the *Bed* of another, hath imposed a *spurious Offspring* upon his *Family* and *Fortunes*; must not think he *repenteth* by being some times troubled in mind about it, but doth nothing to prevent the subsequent *Evils*: it is *meet*, if it be in his power, so to order it that none of the *lawful Issue* receive *damage* by it. He who hath defrauded another by *artifice in dealing*, or a-

D

abusing

abusing a *trust* reposed in him, must not think he hath *repented*, because he hath *asked* God *forgiveness* for it, so long as he detaineth the *gains of unrighteousness* in his hands; it is *meet* (if he be able) that he make him *actual restitution*. He who hath *defamed* another by *calumniating* and *misrepresenting* him, must not think he *repenteth*, by holding *his* tongue for the future: it is *meet*, that (whenever he judgeth it may be serviceable to him) by *acknowledging* the *groundlesness* of it, he make him *reparation*. There is no speaking to all the particular *cases* in this kind, they are so *many* and *various*; let it suffice to say, That tho. where the *offence* hath been *only* against God, to bring forth *fruits* unto him, is all that is required: yet where it is in any kind against our *brother* too, there a consideration is to be had of *him* also, or our *repentance* bringeth not forth *meet fruits*. As it must be thus in our *repentance* of *sins* against the *Temporal* good of others. So it must be

Secondly, In such *sins* as are against their *eternal* good; prejudicial to their *immortal precious Souls*. Such is every one guilty of, who hath been the unhappy instrument of

corrupting and debauching any other person. It is not for any to make light of this, because it was in their own choice, whether they would hearken to, and be perswaded by them, or not. The *Devil* hath so much to plead for his *tempting us*; and yet he will be *tormented* for it, notwithstanding that: and so will *men* too, who have been the means of *enticing* and *turning* any from the *ways of righteousness*, if they endeavour not what they can to *reclaim* them they have so *perverted*, and prevent the fatal *Consequences* of it. The *Lascivious* must not be satisfied with *repenting himself* of his *lasciviousness*, but must seek to bring the *unhappy* *frail one* his importunity prevailed with to *sin with him*, to *repent too*. The *profane* one must not think it sufficient to *recover himself out of the Snare of the Devil*, but must strive to *recover* such as he hath *poisoned* with his loose and *wretched Principles* out of the *Snare of the Devil* also. Was it not a cutting Question of God to *Cain*, *Where is Abel thy Brother*, when it was he that murdered him? but how much deeper must it pierce, to be asked at last, *Where is thy Companion?* whom thou hast been the barbarous cause of depriving, not of *temporal*

life, but of *eternal* ! How knowest thou (O man !) but thy good counsel yet may save them ? it being likely to leave a greater impression on them , than that of any other person. And thinkest thou not thy self concerned to try ?

This is so *meet* , that if it were not *duty* , one would think meer *ingenuity* and *good nature* should be enough to prompt to it. The rich man is represented having so much charity in *Hell* , as to desire his *Brethren* might be warned that they *came not into that place of torment* : and would it not look monstrous to find so little on *Earth* , in any who have endangered the *Souls* of them thy pretended particular uncommon kindness for, to suffer them to go on in the way that leadeth to destruction, which they themselves enticed them into, without caring what becometh of them? Surely as hath been the *transgression* , so ought to be the *repentance* : where the *transgression* hath reached to *others* to *pollute* , there the *repentance* must reach to them also, to *instruct* , *persuade* , and *reform* them.

I conclude with this *one* Inference from that which hath been spoken. When there are so many *fruits meet for repentance* , relating
both

both to *our selves* and *others*, whoever put it off to the *close* of their lives, must be guilty of unanswerable *carelesness* and *presumption*. *Fruits* require *time* to bring them to *maturity*, and can all the *fruits* of *repentance*, (which are no fewer than you have heard) in our *last sickness*, as in a *hot bed*, be *raised* and *ripened* in a few days, or perhaps but hours? Who that hath any sense of an immortal state, would venture it upon such *unlikelihoods*? Can the *Temple of the Holy Ghost* be *built* in a *day*? If the *fruits of repentance* be not only a *sorrowful looking back* upon our *lives past*, but a *sincere living well* for the time to come, how *absurd* as well as *desperate* is it, for any to defer it, while they perceive they cannot live!

Men flatter themselves with the Example of the *Thief upon the Cross*, and the *Labourers* that came in at the *last hour*; both which were never *called before*, and so are not *our case*: but consider not that of the *foolish Virgins*, which is. The Parable acquainteth us, with their *fear* and *sorrow*, their *diligence* and *desire*, their *great cry*, and *running up and down*, their *begging of oyl*, and their *going out to buy*, when the *Bridegroom* was just on
coming;

coming; all that could be done in *so short a space*: And telleth us withal, the *no effect* of it: That when they came to enter, they had *stayed too long, the door was shut* upon them.

It is not to be denied, but that God can do *Miracles of Mercy*, as well as *Miracles of Power*; but why should he that has a *Soul to save* run so *bold, so needles a hazard*, to have nothing else to depend upon?

Having been too long to press this further, I shall end with a passage of *St. Augustine*, containing his Opinion of it. *Hom. 41.* “A faithful Man (*saith he*) living well, goeth hence
 “securely: A wicked Man that Repenteth,
 “and afterwards liveth well, goeth hence securely: He that Repenteth not while he is
 “going hence, *si securus hinc exit ego non sum securus*, &c. Do I say he shall be damned?
 “I do not say it. Do I say he shall be saved?
 “I do not say it. I Judge not, I Promise not, I Know not. Would you free your
 “Souls from doubt? Would you avoid that
 “which is uncertain? Repent before that day
 “overtake you. Then you may have good
 “Reason to believe you are sincere in it, because you leave off your sins, when you
 “might enjoy them. But if you only re-
 nounce

“ nounce them, when you can no longer en-
 “ joy them, you cannot so properly be said
 “ to leave your sins, as your sins to leave
 “ you.

God Almighty grant , that every one of
 us may timely consider of it before the *Ax* be
laid to our Root. For as the Tree falleth so shall
it lye.

FINIS.
